

From: kevin@kevin.phys.unm.edu@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR, Kevin E. Cahill, Dima, Steve McCready
Date: 11/23/01 7:26pm
Subject: Doubts about settlement

Dear DoJ:

Microsoft is the most profitable monopoly in the history of man, and one of the more ruthless. It has used its domination of the PC software industry to cripple the open-software movement and has even tried to pass laws that would make that movement illegal. The DoJ settlement should include a strict and comprehensive prohibition of efforts to stifle the open-software movement.

It is hard to imagine how any government committee would be able to supervise Microsoft's compliance with any agreement.

Microsoft's recent offer to give \$1 billion in computer products to poor school districts is absurd. The real cost to Microsoft of a software product valued at \$300 is about \$1. So in exchange for some \$3 million of CDs and packaging, Microsoft will settle lawsuits, receive millions of dollars of publicity, and create millions of new customers. The proposal of Red Hat http://www.redhat.com/about/presscenter/2001/press_usschools.html to provide its Linux software for free if Microsoft would donate \$1 billion of computer hardware should be taken seriously by all parties to the settlement. It would be a much better deal for the schools.

It is very odd that while the DoJ was suing Microsoft, other US government agencies, such as DoE and NSF, were using Microsoft documents and forms rather than ascii text documents which can be read by people using any operating system. DoE and NSF have been forcing professors applying for research grants either to use Microsoft's operating system or to jump through hoops using programs that imitate Microsoft Word on a Linux system.

Yours truly,
Kevin Cahill

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